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**ADDRESS**  
**TO THE**  
**GRADUATES**  
**OF THE**  
**SOUTH-CAROLINA COLLEGE,**  
**DECEMBER, 1821.**

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**By THOMAS COOPER, M. D.**  
**PRESIDENT, S. C. COLLEGE.**

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**PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE TRUSTEES.**

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**COLUMBIA:**  
**PRINTED BY D. FAUST.**  
**1821.**

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*Bright fund*

## ADDRESS, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

YOU are now about to quit the precincts of the College, and to enter upon the commerce of the world. Your education is supposed to be finished; in reality it is about to commence. The roads that lead to knowledge useful and ornamental, have been pointed out to you; but we can only put you on the path: we have done so; and you must now pursue it for yourselves.

Before you leave this institution finally, it becomes my duty in compliance with established custom, to offer you a few words of parting advice; which I shall do with great plainness and sincerity, leaving the present and future effect of them, to depend on their intrinsic value. I am perfectly aware, that some of the opinions I am about to deliver, will by no means meet your cordial approbation: be it so: I am only solicitous to give you fairly and honestly the practical result of my own observation and long experience: the time was, when I thought as I presume you think now: the time will probably arrive, when you also will adopt the sentiments I am about to deliver.

And first, it is usual to exhort you strenuously, to cultivate the religious part of your education, and to bear in constant remembrance the obligations you are under, and the duties you owe to Almighty God, your creator, preserver, and benefactor. In this exhortation, I cordially, and devoutly join. Independent of the consolation and support which religion affords to us as individuals, under the misfortunes and trials of this transitory life, I see not how society can dispense with it. I hold it certain, that every denomination of christians, inculcating the superintendence of a moral governor of the universe, and a future state of rewards and punishments, wherein, to every man will be rendered according to his works, contributes to morality some of its most valuable and powerful sanctions. Considered in connection with social communities, this is the great end and use of all religion—that, under its influence, we are likely to become in all respects better men and better citizens; and no further, as it seems to me, is



civil society concerned in it. So far as religious tenets plainly furnish direct and additional motives to good conduct and examples of good character in our intercourse with each other, so far have they an imperious claim to be respected and cherished in every community; and the religious persuasion which most effectually promotes this great and good end, is to *society* the best: For it is with our actions, with our conduct, with our demeanour, in all our domestic and civil relations, that society has to do; and not with our opinions. Of our conduct all can judge, and all can feel the effect; our opinions are beyond human controul: They are the result of such evidence as occurs to us: they acknowledge no umpire; they are obligatory even when erroneous, and we ourselves have no power over them. Let our endeavor therefore be, to do honor to the religious denomination to which we belong, by undeviating rectitude of conduct, and sincere charity towards the views which our neighbor may take of religious tenets different from our own: and let us adopt the criterion laid down by Christ himself, "By their fruits shall ye know them."

About, as you are, to plunge into the vortex of wordly pursuit, I have some general and some specific observations to offer to your consideration: trite perhaps, but not the less important.

Our first and leading object, on the road of life, is to acquire; by industrious and honorable pursuits, a sufficient income to support ourselves and our families in reasonable comfort; and to accumulate within reasonable bounds, for the wants of old age, and the claims of our offspring. It is seldom, that this cannot be done by the exertions commonly used; sometimes indeed, the want of success arises from want of reasonable industry, but this is not often the case.

The failures that I have seen are those that have arisen from want of keeping accounts, from carelessness of minute expenses, from anticipation of resources, and facility of incurring debt. I have seen enough of life to satisfy me, that frugality is not merely a matter of prudence, it is a virtue of the first order. The want of it, is a more serious evil than the average of all the accidents and misfortunes of life put together. There is no substitute for it. I am far from recommending a course of conduct miserly or niggardly. But the habit of permitting expense to exceed income—the habit of running in

debt, without seeing clearly the means of getting rid of it, is productive of more misery, mental and bodily, than any other cause that I know of in the intercourse of society. I do not say, that a poor man cannot be an honest man. Poverty is comparative. No man can be considered as really poor, whose wants are within his income, however small this may be; but no man can be otherwise considered than as poor, whose wants and expenses exceed his income, however large this may be. Debt is the parent of servility, of self-degradation, too often of vice. Franklin, the Philosopher of common life, has said, what all experience confirms, "it is hard for an empty purse to stand upright." Remember then, that although mirth and luxury, and convivialty may exist with debt, happiness never can.

Next to the attainment of a moderate competency to supply the necessities and the reasonable comforts of life, for ourselves, and our families, is the love, respect, and consideration of that class of society among whom our lives are destined to be spent. But it is the love, respect, and consideration of the good and of the wise only, that is valuable in the commerce of the world: it is from an intercourse with *these* classes alone, that our good habits are to be confirmed, our passions restrained, our real knowledge increased, and our best interests promoted. These are the classes which silently but surely exercise the greatest influence in society, and command the minds of their fellow-citizens. Shun therefore as the pestilence, the idle, the dissipated, the vicious. Every acquaintance of that description is a sure drawback on respectability of character. The public is clear-sighted: they judge of a man by his companions: *noscitur a socio*, is a maxim acted on for ages, which continued experience has established as a moral axiom. Young men are far too careless in this particular, and they value mere companionable qualities at far more than their real worth. Happy will you be, if you can avoid this rock on which youth is so apt to split; and guide your conduct by a maxim which experience has forced upon us as an established truth.

But friendship is founded on similarity of taste; and to enjoy the society and earn the good opinion of the good and the wise, we must endeavor to be good and wise ourselves. Nor is this endeavor in the slightest degree inconsistent with the real and the reasonable enjoyments of life. Neither wis-

dom nor virtue is morose or unsociable ; but far otherwise : all they require is, that our pleasures shall not be the parents of pain ; that they shall not improperly waste our time, hurt our health, or injure our character.

I acknowledge these are common-place observations—trite maxims—to be heard from every pulpit—inculcated by old age wherever youth falls in his way. But youth is the period for pleasure : it is the season when we look with indulgence on eager, careless, thoughtless, enjoyment : it is wearisome, say the young, to listen to these wise sayings of old age, whose value is worn away by perpetual repetition. But why I would ask, are they perpetually repeated ? Why are they considered as the axioms and maxims of a prudent life ? Grown by long use and observation into proverbs and precepts, which youth glances over with careless haste ? It is because they are *true* : it is because the dear-bought experience of years has forced them upon our convictions : it is because we lament when old, our slighting them when young, that we now urge and press and repeat them to those whose future welfare is the subject of our anxious wishes. *Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.*

You will be destined to the pursuits of agriculture, or commerce, or manufactures : or to the professions of law, physic, or divinity ; and it is probable, that you will all become voluntarily, politicians of various grades.

The elementary notions you have received of chemical, mineralogical, and mechanical Philosophy, are very applicable to agricultural pursuits, and may furnish inexhaustible sources of instructive amusement, during the leisure that a life of agriculture occasionally affords. The analysis of soils, the mode of action of manures, whether chemically, or mechanically, or as the food of plants, or as stimuli to the living fibre, cannot but be useful to an agriculturalist, if attended to with judgment and perseverance. The elementary doctrines have been fully illustrated, and you may profit, if you think fit, by the instructions you have received ; always remembering, that you have received elementary knowledge only—that kind of knowledge, which will greatly facilitate your future researches, and enable you to obtain more ; but assiduous reading, further experiment, and patient attention, are still necessary. No part of the education you have received here, can be con-



considered as useless, even to those who are destined to a life of commercial pursuit: correctness and neatness of composition, accuracy in your accounts, a knowledge of those numerous commodities that are to be judged of by their chemical character, must be considered as useful knowledge, and the time spent in acquiring it, as time gained.

The period of manufactures among us, is hardly yet arrived, but it is fast approaching. Skill in machinery, (by no means deficient in this country) will gradually compensate for dearth of labour; and we shall soon begin to work up our own materials for domestic consumption to an extent far beyond what is commonly supposed. Nor will any alteration of the tariff in favour of that system be necessary. We need not urge Congress to tax the great mass of our citizens, in support of a few monopolizing speculators, or pick the pocket of the farmer to swell the purse of the manufacturer. The system of home manufacture will go on without it. Almost every branch of the woollen trade, most branches of the cotton trade, white goods, dyed goods and printed goods, many parts of the hard ware manufacture, glass, coarse pottery, iron castings, copper, brass, plated ware, red and white lead, chemical drugs, colours, leather, and very many others, succeed already to a very great extent, without any positive support from the legislature, and are daily increasing as fast as their best advocates can reasonably expect. A few more machines to work up the raw materials of woollen and cotton in our private houses, are still wanting; nor do I believe that a greater benefit could be conferred on this part of the country than a *Spinning Jenny*, for domestic use, and a power loom for coarse weaving, such as could be managed by our black population. But I introduce this subject more especially, for the purpose of remarking, that your education here, chemical and mathematical, has peculiarly fitted you to take advantage of approaching circumstances. So intimately connected are all kinds of manufacture, with chemical principles, and the principles of machinery, that persons thus educated must derive peculiar advantages from the studies that have lately occupied their attention, if manufacture of almost any description should fall in the line of their future pursuit. You now know where to look for the information which it behoves you to acquire; you will not wander in darkness and ignorance, as

these must, who have not had the same advantages, and you will be better qualified than others, to pursue the branch you engage in, with profit to yourself and advantage to the community.

To those of you who mean to apply to the study of the law, and who can *afford* to follow the advice I offer, I would say, occupy the intervening period till you are four and twenty years of age, in a more liberal and enlarged course of study than is usually adopted. Lay your foundation broader and deeper than is customary. Your reputation and your interest will be ultimately promoted by it. And first of all, I recommend that you spend an hour daily in keeping up your acquaintance with the classic authors; an accurate knowledge of the Latin language in particular, will not only give you a far more respectable standing at the bar than you can have without it, but enable you to consult and to cite the civil law, and the foreign jurists, on those eminent questions in which a lawyer is expected to exhibit profound research. Eloquent declamation may please an ignorant jury or bystanders, who come only for amusement, but high standing with a court, is only to be earned by laborious investigation and solid argument. It is a crying evil in our country—at this College—among you whom I am addressing—at the American bar generally—in the American legislatures every where, to speak too much, and too long—to substitute oratory for argument—declamation for research—and to value a man for the clearness of his voice, the fluency of his diction, the elegance of his delivery, rather than for the talent of communicating solid information in a few words, intelligibly delivered. I well know that many now hear me, who have been exhausted by the fatigue of declamation, when sounds continue to din upon the ear without one new idea accompanying them to crave admission into the mind. I know this failing prevails within the walls of this College; and that our youth are apt to be caught by the glare of declamation, and to applaud a neat arrangement of words where the ideas are like two grains of wheat in three bushels of chaff—*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*. It is right and fit, that some one should say this to you my young friends, as I say it to you now, and to assure you that there is good sense in the old proverb, “empty vessels sound most.” The flaunting meretricious dress in which some transatlantic orators

have clothed their ideas, has attracted too many admirers among our youth. This is a digression however; but I hope not an useless one. I return to my subject.

The system of education pursued in this College, is peculiarly adapted to aid the professional studies of the future Lawyer. You have been well grounded by the very able professor of Moral Philosophy, in those general principles of Ethics, on which all law is or ought to be founded. You have been taught by the same Professor; the right rules of reasoning, so as to enable you to frame in the most conclusive manner, your own arguments, and to detect with habitual facility, the fallacies of an opponent.

A young man wishing to become, after the course of education that finishes here, a well instructed *Lawyer*, should commence with the Law of Nations, pursuing carefully the treatises of Burlamaqui, and Vattel, Martens and Ward, and consulting occasionally Puffendorf, the Grotius of Barbeyrac, and Rutherford. Chitty's Law of Nations savours too much of the orders in council, to be relied on as authority.

He should then read the Elements of the Civil Law, in Justinian's Institutes, and in Wood; and then with care the Treatise on Obligations of Pothier in Mr. Evans's edition. He should also familiarize himself with the language of the Civil Law, for it will not suffice, that you read Cicero with fluency. He may now begin with Sullivan, Blackstone and Woodeson; and having perused them, begin again with Blackstone; reading concomitantly, Cruise on Real Property, the History of Practice in Boote, in Crompton's preface, and in Hammond's treatise on Parties to Actions. The elements of Nisi Prius Law, and the elements of Crown Law, will succeed.

He should then read the elements of Chancery Law, in the treatises of Mitford, Madox, Fonblanque, and Sugden. The Chancery doctrine of contracts is collected by Newman; the Common Law doctrine of Contracts by Comyns; and the Civil Law doctrine on the same subject, by Wood & Pothier. If he means to practice in a sea port town, he must study the treatises on Insurance and the Admiralty Law; and he must read in their own language Pothier, Emerigon and Valins.

He will now be qualified to understand Coke on Littleton, and the elements of Special Pleading in Law and Equity,



which should be accompanied with the practice of drawing declarations and pleas, and bills in Chancery. This will require a moderate part of every day for a twelve month at least. In reading the reporters, he should begin with Plowden & Saunders in Williams's edition. After these, they may be taken in the inverse order of their dates.

A lawyer coming to the bar thus qualified, will feel conscientiously satisfied, that his client may safely depend on him. His first legal appearance will be likely to give an impression that will prove a source of permanent profit, and he will not incur the hazard of losing any part of his reputation once acquired, because the foundation that supports it will be solid.

I hope there is no occasion to say to a *Physician*, that so much important information relating to his profession is locked up in the Latin language, which even in our own country, and at this very moment is used as the vehicle of medical discussions, that he cannot well dispense with the manifest expediency of keeping up his classical reading.

To a physician also, chemical knowledge is now absolutely indispensable, and botanical knowledge highly desirable. I do not pretend to say that great attention and long experience will not make a good physician, without the above named requisites; for I know otherwise; but it will at least be allowed, that such a person would have been a better physician with them. You have had here a classical and a chemical education; botany is yet wanted to our course of collegiate education, which I hope ere long will admit of it.

I say to the young Physician as to the Lawyer, *if you can afford it*, delay your practice till you are four and twenty. The classical and the chemical part of your education, should be daily resumed. But the most strenuous attention should be paid to anatomy, physiology and the practice of surgery, with a repetition of private dissections, till the practice of dissection is perfectly familiar, and the dexterity habitual. This cannot be acquired under two years exclusive and sedulous attention to these branches: You may, in a short time acquire elementary notions, and a general idea of morbid dissection; but the practice that will make it familiar, that will give coolness and self reliance to the mind, and steadiness to the hand, cannot occupy a less period than I have assigned to

it. Other two years for Midwifery, Pharmacy, Materia Medica, and the Institutes of Medicine, will be considered as little enough by those who have already gone over the ground. In attending the Institutes, pay particular attention in taking your notes, to sift all the theory from the ascertained facts. Theory fluctuates perpetually, the facts remain. There are many strong, and indeed irrefragable arguments, why the period I assign is quite early enough to qualify a young man to take charge of the lives and properties of his fellow citizens; but I forbear to dwell on the subject, because I fear the time of reformation in practice is yet at a distance.

Those who are destined to the study of Divinity, when they quit this College, will have to study it at some of those sectarian seminaries exclusively destined for the clerical profession. The classical and scientific knowledge acquired here, will be useful in a high degree, because it is extremely desirable that in all his deportment and in all his acquirements a clergyman should be enabled to assume and maintain the character of a liberal scholar and a perfect gentleman. A clerical body, truly of this description, dispersed through our country, and liberally maintained and exercising that charity of opinion toward others, which they expect toward themselves, must have in time, a most beneficial influence in favour of rational religion, and tend to humanize the neighbourhood to which those talents are devoted. I know not where a better foundation can be laid for such a character than here; where the liberal studies of almost every description that can adorn it, are attended to in our course of education.

When a young man, destined for the profession of Divinity goes from this place, he will be expected, on finishing his studies for the ministry, not merely to possess that religion of the heart which devoutly influences our habitual conduct, but that competent knowledge of theology as a most important branch of historical literature, which will enable him to defend his tenets against all oppugnation. It is not sufficient in the present day, that he quits his theological course, well versed in the peculiar opinions that characterize the sect of christians to which he belongs. Let him be aware, that the more extended information of modern times, absolutely requires, that he shall have studied in the ancient fathers of the four first centuries the history of the Christian Church. He must be critically

grounded in the history of the canon of scripture, and know precisely the facts and arguments that support or oppose the *extrinsic* evidence on which the historical authenticity of the scriptural books is founded; he must know their precise claims in this respect as based on extraneous testimony of contemporary authors, on vague or precise quotation, and on partial or general acceptance. He must be aware of the many objections, to which, on these grounds they have, by some, been deemed liable, and be able, by showing the fallacy of these objections, to repel them.

As part of this division of the subject, he will have to attend to the history of spurious gospels, and interpolated passages; and the evidences for or against their authenticity; to the history, also, of heresies during this period; wherein the orthodox and the heterodox were alternately heretics to each other, till the strong arm of imperial authority interfered to settle the disputed questions.

Moreover, he must know precisely the *intrinsic* evidence of the sacred books; the objections made to their dissonance; and the strong grounds of belief, founded on their reasonable harmony, on the motives of the actors, and on the comparative excellence of the morality set forth in them.

Again, he must be well acquainted with the *progress* of theological opinions and doctrines, with the histories of councils, and the value of their pretensions.

He must then trace the history of metaphysical theology, through the principal schoolmen, to the period of the Reformation; and the changes of theological opinion and ecclesiastical discipline, from that time to this. In so doing, he must be perfectly grounded in the arguments by which his own doctrines and his own form of church discipline are supported or opposed; and he must be prepared to prove beyond doubt, that the tenets he insists on as articles of faith, are absolutely essential to the great scheme of christianity propounded by Christ himself, the author of our religion. This course of study will give him charity for the opinions of others; he will excuse those who have had fewer opportunities of arriving at truth than himself; and he will be more ready to ascribe a difference of opinion to unavoidable differences in the views taken of the evidence, than to any fault of intention.

But this is not all; he will have to study the sacred books



in their original languages! he must be aware of controversies concerning disputed texts, the comparative value of various readings, and the discrepance of translators.

For the purposes of exposition, he should have also, a competent knowledge of the various manners and customs of the people of the east; and the peculiarities of idiom and national modes of expression, that will serve to explain and illustrate the sacred text. It is for the want of this knowledge that the bold metaphors of Eastern phraseology have been mistaken for literal truths.

A Clergyman is paid for acquiring all this knowledge, essential to the literary and polemic part of his profession; for his congregation have not the talents or the means, or the leisure to acquire it, and they expect to find it in the pastor, to whom they look up for instruction and information.

I do not mean, that a young man should be prohibited from entering on the work of the ministry, till he has acquired all this information; but until he has acquired it, he will be frequently at a loss in the pursuit and defence of his own vocation: he may have zeal, but it will not be according to knowledge. He is absolutely called upon by the holy scriptures to be able to give a reason for the hope that is in him; and it is his duty to clear up the doubts and fears that may oppress weak consciences under his pastoral care. Much time and much study will be required for this course of laborious investigation; but he is bound to enter upon, and to master it, so far as the means are in his power. I wish those means were more amply supplied at this place, but in this, as in many other parts of critical literature, our library is greatly wanting.

I have said, it is probable, you will all of you become politicians of various grades. Happy the country like our own, where every situation of life may furnish candidates for the highest—where political honours unconfined to privileged classes, are bestowed from public opinion of political merit. Where they are thus conferred, the wish to obtain them is a laudable ambition; for we have to earn the approbation of our fellow-citizens before we can succeed. But I am constrained to say of offices under government, that in a pecuniary point of view, and as a remuneration for the talents and services required, they are absolutely insignificant; from the President of the United States, to the tide waiter of the custom-house.

Which of them furnishes the probable means of providing for the education and reasonable establishment of a family?

Those who have large fortunes may prudently gratify their honest views of ambition : but those who depend on the salary of office, must have many an anxious thought for the offspring they leave behind them. Hence I am decidedly in favor of recommending the peaceable and unpretending pursuits of civil life, to those whose search is after happiness; and I have no scruple in pronouncing, that prudence bids us shun the path of the politician.

It appears to me, that hitherto one main road to political influence has been fluency of utterance, and popular elocution. That the success which these talents have met with, has induced too many of our citizens to believe, that oratory is the first of human qualifications, and the sure passport to political eminence. Hence the more solid acquirement of historical and political facts—the minute and accurate, but laborious investigation of the principles of statistics, political œconomy, taxation and finance—of our commercial relations and our manufacturing competencies, in all their detail, are neglected. Political claims are too apt to be put on other grounds: upon political influence among the people in some geographical section of the union: upon a steady adherence to some political party, or some political leaders; upon the popular eloquence that can influence elections; and qualifications of similar import. A political life so governed, can add nothing to the useful knowledge of the politician, save the methods of party manoeuvring, and of blinding the understandings of the people.

Among the early nations of antiquity, preserving democratic features in their form of government, oratory was much cultivated; because, when books were scarce and newspapers unknown, it was from their orators that the people acquired a knowledge of public facts both of external and internal relation. But the whole history of ancient oratory demonstrates, that it was little else than the art of cheating the understandings of a gaping populace by amusing their imaginations, & exciting their passions, for the purpose of carrying some favourite measure of the moment. Sometimes this measure was a proper one, frequently the reverse. I hold all modern oratory in much the same estimation. I cannot praise those

who are skilled by the dexterous use of harmonious periods, and assumed earnestness of manner, to make, like Belial, the worse appear the better reason. In the profession of the law, it is barely excusable. I doubt if it be justifiable any where. I have no objection to that eloquence of the heart, which arises naturally, spontaneously from warmth of feeling in the course of debate; but all studied premeditated oratory, savours strongly, either of vanity or fraud. It is not a cool address to the judgment and understanding, but an artificial appeal to the passions. A court of justice would despise a forensic speaker, who would address the bench as he addressed the jury. But the peculiar view which it behoves me to take of the subject, is, that he who studies to be eloquent, will never study to be wise; a dealer in tropes, metaphors, allegories and similies, is seldom a dealer in facts. No man who pays such sedulous attention to the phrases of his oration, will ever be actuated by the sole desire of conveying instruction and information, and therefore will never seek for it. Remember, every man who thinks, thinks in words, and if he thinks clearly, he will speak clearly; a very little practice is necessary to overcome the diffidence of a first attempt; and then a speaker will do far better by adopting the stile of address, which the subject itself suggests to him, than by imitating the manner of the first orator that ever delivered a popular address. People begin to be aware of this, particularly of late. Look round among our Congressional members; to what class of them does public opinion point for a future president? To the talkers against time, or to the plain men, who never rise but to convey solid information in plain language.

My advice to you therefore, is the advice of Solomon, "my son, get wisdom, get understanding." The means of communicating it in the most eligible way, will come when the occasion calls for it.

I will detain you no longer; may God bless you my young friends, and incline your hearts to keep his Laws.

F I N I S.











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